



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Carterville Fishery Resources Office (CFRO)

Accomplishment Report: November/December 2004

The Carterville Fishery Resources Office (CFRO) conserves, protects, and enhances aquatic ecosystems throughout Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and parts of Missouri by working with others to protect and restore habitat, improve sport fishing, manage and control aquatic nuisance species, and conserve and restore native aquatic species (particularly interjurisdictional fish such as sturgeon and paddlefish).

Our recent activities are summarized below, but for additional information or questions please feel free to contact us:

Rob Simmonds, Project Leader
Greg Conover, Assistant Project Leader
Judy Patrick, Administrative Technician
Nathan Caswell, Fishery Biologist
Colby Wrasse, Fishery Biologist

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Biotechnician Cory Hilliard empties net into livewell while electrofishing (pg. 4). USFWS photo.

Partnerships & Accountability

Coordination Meetings with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Others

Simmonds attended coordination meetings with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) staff from the St. Louis and Rock Island districts. These meetings provided a great opportunity for him to learn more about habitat restoration efforts on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, share CFRO's interests and expertise, and to discuss possible opportunities for collaboration on future projects. In addition to USACE, staff from the Mark Twain NWR and Rock Island Ecological Services Field Office also attended, providing a great opportunity to see habitat restoration and other issues from a variety of perspectives. Thank you to all those who took the time out of their busy schedules for these meetings.

Other Activities

- Caswell, Conover, and Simmonds developed an outreach document for coordination with partners (sent in same email as this accomplishment report).
- CFRO staff worked with Shelley Simmonds (volunteer) to continue development of a new CFRO website. Many ideas were discussed and good progress was made toward getting the website ready for submission to the Regional Office for approval.
- Conover, Patrick, and Simmonds completed a monthly CFRO budget meeting.

Aquatic Species Conservation & Management

Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference Includes Ohio River Symposium

Conover and Simmonds attended the 65th Annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference. The technical presentations were an excellent way for Simmonds to get familiar with fisheries issues/management in the Midwest and for Conover to maintain familiarity with recent information/studies. Of particular interest was the Ohio River Symposium which provided both a historical perspective and up to date information on one of the major river systems in which CFRO works. Of course the meeting was also a great way to develop and strengthen partnerships.

Other Activities

- Caswell completed a preliminary draft of the 1995-2004 MICRA Paddlefish National Stock Assessment Report. He worked with Jo Anne Grady, Assistant Project Leader of the Columbia FRO, to complete the data entry and analysis. The draft report will be presented at the MICRA Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee Meeting in January. To help make this possible, Conover and Hilliard provided additional data to Columbia FRO, processed new data, rectified database discrepancy questions from Columbia FRO, read reference tags, and Conover provided guidance on development of the report.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Asian Carp Habitat Use on the Middle Mississippi River NWR

Caswell continued analysis of Asian carp habitat use data on the Middle Mississippi River NWR. The Wilkinson Island Division of the Middle Mississippi River NWR contains several bodies of water that are connected to the Mississippi River at certain times of the year. In summer 2004, Carterville FRO collected seine and fyke-net samples from



Fishery Biologist Nate Caswell sorts Asian carp and other fish from the Middle Mississippi River NWR. Photo by Rob Simmonds, USFWS.

these backwater areas. Preliminary results show that nearly all water bodies on Wilkinson Island contained young-of-year Asian carp. Most of Wilkinson Island was inundated by the Mississippi River in spring 2004, making these waters available to young Asian carp. – Nate Caswell

Asian Carp Management and Control Plan Update to the ANS Task Force in DC

At the request of the National Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (Task Force), CFRO has organized an Asian Carp Work Group (ACWG) and is leading the development of a national management and control plan for four species of Asian carps: bighead carp, black carp, grass carp, and silver carp. Implementation of this plan is important in minimizing the geographic scope, as well as ecological and economic impacts of these species that are rapidly invading public waters of the central U.S.

Carterville FRO biologist and ACWG Chair, Greg Conover, provided the Task Force an update on the Asian Carp Management and Control Plan at their annual Fall Meeting in Arlington, Virginia. Accomplishments reported included May and August Work Group meetings and a presentation at the annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society. The August meeting was much smaller and more focused than the May ACWG meeting. During the August meeting, Work Group participants reviewed Task Force expectations and the draft framework of the management and control plan; were

provided an overview of the May ACWG breakout sessions; and identified components and writing teams to develop the plan. The draft goals and objectives of the plan were critically reviewed, including in-depth conversations regarding the wording and intent of the plan. The initial three goals and seven objectives were expanded to six goals and fourteen objectives, which are currently being reviewed by the ACWG. Drafting of the plan is expected to begin immediately following this review with a draft Management and Control Plan completed prior to the Spring Meeting of the Task Force. – Greg Conover

Other Activities

- Caswell worked on a Cache River Black Carp monitoring report. The Illinois DNR completed a basin-wide fishery survey in the Cache River in 2004. This data, along with additional data collected by CFRO, was used to determine if the Cache River basin contained wild black carp. The first capture of a black carp in the wild was in Horseshoe Lake, within the Cache River basin.

Public Use



Biotechnician Cory Hilliard empties net into livewell while electrofishing. USFWS photo.

Sport Fish Management Reports Provided to Military Bases

Sport fishing on military bases provides recreational opportunities for military and Department of Defense personnel. To help provide quality angling, Caswell completed and submitted the 2004 Fisheries Management Report for Scott Air Force Base (AFB). Scott AFB, near O' Fallon, Illinois has two small lakes that are cooperatively managed

by Scott AFB and CFRO. Caswell also completed and submitted the 2004 Fisheries Management Report for Crane Naval Weapons Support Center (NWSC). Crane NWSC, in Crane, Indiana is home to Lake Greenwood, an 800-acre lake and many small ponds that are cooperatively managed by Crane NWSC Natural Resources, CFRO, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. – *Nate Caswell*

More Largemouth Bass Stocked into Crab Orchard Lake

Crab Orchard Lake is a 7,000-acre impoundment on Crab Orchard NWR. It is a popular destination for anglers, host to several fishing tournaments each year, and important to the local economy. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR), CFRO, and Crab Orchard NWR cooperatively manage this recreational fishery. The lake is a popular spot for largemouth bass fishing and supplemental stocking is important to maintaining the quality of bass fishing.

Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) recently stocked 10,945 largemouth bass (4-5-in. long) into Crab Orchard Lake. Carterville FRO put in a request for these fish but based on other previous commitments it didn't look like the fish were going to materialize. Lucky for us and the anglers who fish Crab Orchard Lake, they did! Thanks to Genoa NFH for making it happen and to Chris Bickers, Illinois DNR, for helping the hatchery staff get the fish into Crab Orchard Lake. - *Rob Simmonds*

Aquatic Habitat Conservation & Management

Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee - Mississippi River Projects/Issues

Simmonds attended a meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee who's charter is "to provide coordination regarding fish and wildlife matters associated with main channel dredging, dredged material disposal, physical river modifications, backwater modifications, and river management studies and investigations." It is "composed of fish and wildlife biologists from Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, USFWS, and COE." A number of topics were discussed but of particular interest were 1) pool plans for the restoration and management of Mississippi River pools and 2) "404 studies" investigating the effects of dredged material disposal on fish and other aquatic resources (contact Nate Caswell for a copy of our draft manuscript on the fish component in Pool 20 and the La Grange Pool and Scott Yess [608-783-8431] for Pool 12). As so many meetings are for a new Project Leader, this meeting was very beneficial in getting to know the issues and the partners working on them.

Other Activities

- Caswell prepared/aged fin rays and analyzed age data from Asian carp collected by Southern Illinois University as part of a three-year study to evaluate the success of fish habitat restoration on Swan Lake. Caswell also completed

- CFRO's portion of the Swan Lake HREP Interim Report for the US Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District (report reviewed by Conover).
- Conover revised a Fishery Overview and participated in a conference call to discuss a draft Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report for the Ohio River Mainstem System Studies being developed by the Frankfort Ecological Services Field Office in Kentucky.
 - Caswell worked with Illinois DNR Streams Specialist Steve Pescitelli to finalize plans for the Big Rock Creek Fish Passage Project. This project is the first of its kind in Illinois and will provide fish passage at two low-head dams on Big Rock Creek (first project we are aware of where rock is used to create a ramp over the dam to allow fish to pass). This will open 69 miles of stream to fish populations from the Fox River basin.
 - Conover and Simmonds met with the Marion Ecological Services Sub-office and the Middle Mississippi NWR to review and discuss U.S. Army Corp of Engineer Channel Maintenance Construction Projects on the Middle Mississippi River.
 - Conover submitted comments on the UMRCC fish passage/fish barrier draft position statement.
 - Caswell and Simmonds met with Kraig McPeck of the Rock Island Ecological Services Field Office regarding the proposed Belvidere Dam fish passage project. This project has been a cooperative effort between the City of Belvidere, USGS, Illinois DNR, Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, and the Service. Once completed, this project will open more than 300 miles of stream in the Kishwaukee watershed.

Workforce Management



Fishery Biologist Colby Wrasse (left) receives a certificate of appreciation from Assistant Project Leader Greg Conover. Photo by Nate Caswell, USFWS.

Wrasse Begins Extended Detail to Columbia FRO to Work Sturgeon in Missouri R.

After several years with CFRO, Colby Wrasse is pursuing options at our sister station, Columbia FRO. His work on the “404 Studies” and many, many other projects was invaluable. Colby worked hard, got along well with others, and didn’t complain. Columbia FRO is lucky to have him.

Other Activities

- Conover and Simmonds completed annual performance evaluations for all CFRO staff. In addition, Individual Development Plans (IDPs) have been updated for most staff. These IDPs are effective tools for identification of short and long-term career goals and the actions an individual should take to help achieve those goals.
- Conover met with staff from Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Marion Ecological Services Sub-office, and CERCLA to organize a staff Christmas Party. All CFRO staff enjoyed the food and festivities resulting from their hard work.
- Carterville FRO staff attended monthly safety/staff meetings at Crab Orchard NWR.

Misc. Activities

Other Activities

- Caswell located and organized fish specimens for the Service’s National Conservation and Training Center (NCTC). Carterville FRO collected and preserved many Mississippi River basin fish during the now-complete 404 Dredge Material Placement Study. These fish have now become available as ichthyologic educational tools. Alan Temple from NCTC requested a number of specimens, and several hundred fish are now ready to be shipped.